

Better Choices:  
Evaluating the Effectiveness of Behavior Management Programs

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### Abstract

Managing student behavior is often looked upon as a sidebar in teaching. The lack of formal classroom management training in teacher education programs reveals the low importance placed on this skill. As a result, teachers are often very well prepared to instruct, but in terms of effectively understanding the behavior of students – particularly in terms of individuals, rather than the larger groups – these skills are largely underdeveloped.

In New Hampshire's Island Program, resources are available to help serve children whose behaviors have placed them at risk. The question remains: Do these programs effectively modify children's behavior in order to prepare them for school and other aspects of their lives?

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Island program. It is the intent of this work to apply strategies to programs in California that serve this population.

In reviewing the literature on program evaluation and behavior modification, I found only general program evaluation reports. The gap appears to be in evaluating a behavior management program. The two interviews illuminated the theoretical basis for the Island Program's approach, as well as identifying guidelines for monitoring programmatic success.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

During the Summer of 2010, I was employed by the Island Program, a year-round program in which New Hampshire boys are encouraged to learn new skills and challenge themselves in an atmosphere of positivity and team-oriented activity. During the school year, the boys participate in Island's community outreach program that includes visitations by the program's year-round staff. The year culminates in the "Island Challenge," a 25-day summer camp experience on an island in Newfound Lake during which the boys encounter new challenges and learn to work together. According to the program's website, the Island Program (2010) encourages increased self-worth, improved behavior, and high achievement. (The Island Challenge, para. 2)

While I found the general approach of this program in meeting its goals to be admirable, I took issue with several aspects of the program. For one, the "one size fits all" approach – that is, all expectations are uniformly applied, with no accounting for special needs or disorders – ran contrary to the idea of comprehensive, individualized support that has come to be expected in education. If the counselors – those individuals who are with the boys of this single-gender program night and day – are not aware of the unique and highly relevant psychological and physiological conditions of the boys, how can they be expected to serve them effectively? Should the boys, in other words, be expected to simply "get over it?"

### Statement of the Problem

Teacher training programs often leave out behavior management, and there exists a need for a means of evaluating the effectiveness of programs that intend to fill that void. Behavior management refers to the development and correction of good behavior. This extends beyond the classroom setting into all areas of the child's life. The programs being referred to in this case are defined broadly to include any organization operating outside of the school system, public or private. This does not exclude collaboration or cooperation between these programs and schools, but simply excludes the efforts made by schools and districts internally to modify and manage student behavior.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine how programs such as Island can be evaluated in their effectiveness. The core component of this effort is to define effectiveness as it relates to behavior management, and to identify the criteria for programs to meet this standard. This information can not only be used to evaluate and improve existing programs, but also to create guidelines for the foundation of new programs where they are needed.

How do programs like Island make positive, long-lasting changes in behavior, to the extent that the program can be considered “successful”? By what standard can this “success” be evaluated? To answer these questions, it is necessary to overcome the problem of quantifying behavior in a way that can be applied not only to Island specifically, but to schools and behavior programs anywhere.

## Theoretical Rationale

B.F. Skinner developed the theory of operant conditioning:

B. F. Skinner's entire system is based on **operant conditioning**. The organism is in the process of "operating" on the environment, which in ordinary terms means it is bouncing around its world, doing what it does. During this "operating," the organism encounters a special kind of stimulus, called a **reinforcing stimulus**, or simply a reinforcer. This special stimulus has the effect of increasing the **operant** -- that is, the behavior occurring just before the reinforcer. This is operant conditioning: "the behavior is followed by a consequence, and the nature of the consequence modifies the organisms tendency to repeat the behavior in the future (Boeree 2006, para. 9).

This theory is usually implemented in schools as a standardized disciplinary system. This involves a system of rewards and consequences for student behavior. This theory is put in place to help students with poor behavior control to internalize the locus of control (Bulus, 2011). The instructor seeks to encourage appropriate behavior by rewarding students when they are behaving according to the rules and expectations of the classroom.

## Assumptions

For the purposes of this research, it is assumed that schools cannot address the problem of behavior management and modification on their own, and therefore require supplementation in some form in order to manage this problem. The concepts of positive discipline and reinforcement are also assumed to be at the heart of any modern, effective program. The

principles of behavior management are also assumed to be the same regardless of geographical location; while some aspects of implementing a program are necessarily dependent on region-specific factors, the underlying premises of human behavior remain the same.

### Background and Need

The Positive Education Program (PEP) served as a model for applying theory to practice in working with children with serious emotional difficulty. The basic belief was to set a positive environment and work on building on the strengths of children rather than identifying their weaknesses. The program was successful in helping students develop an internal locus of control where they could see themselves as being in charge of their own behavior. The success of this program led to other applications in specialized settings throughout the United States. (Valore, 2005)



## Chapter 2 Review of the Literature

### Introduction

The literature review includes the following: historical context, review of the previous literature, administrative records, special collections, and interview with an expert. The literature review is designed to provide background knowledge on the role of specially-designed educational programs using behavior modification approaches with at-risk children.

### Historical Context

Gage, Adamson, Mitchell, Lierheimer, O'Connor, Bailey, Schultz, Schmidt and Jones (2010) examined the history of evaluation practices of programs for students with emotional and/or behavioral disorders. Early evaluation approaches from the 1960s were poorly designed. Additionally, there was a lack of uniform application of behavior management techniques across programs. The authors indicated in the report that, in 2004, the U.S. Department of Education funded behavior research centers to systematically evaluate students with these special needs. The authors report that, in practice, such program outcomes are poor because teachers lack the support and resources to consistently implement this approach.

## Review of the Previous Literature

The nature of this study necessitates a combination of evaluation research and behaviorism in order to define the criteria for an effective behavior management program. Although Powell (2006) focuses primarily on evaluation research as it applies to library information systems, much of this work is easily generalizable to other areas of focus as well. To begin, Powell includes two lists of reasons for conducting this research in the first place. The first list of purposes (again, focused on libraries but quite applicable to behavior management) tells us that evaluation allows programs to:

1. account for how they use their limited resources
2. explain what they do
3. enhance their visibility
4. describe their impact
5. increase efficiency
6. avoid errors
7. support planning activities
8. express concern for their public
9. support decision making
10. strengthen their political position. (Powell, 2006, p. 103)

Following that is a list from Weiss (1998) that provides a more in-depth array of reasons for program evaluation:

1. Determining how clients are faring
2. Providing legitimacy for decisions
3. Fulfilling grant requirements
4. Making midcourse corrections in programs
5. Making decisions to continue or culminate programs
6. Testing new ideas
7. Choosing the best alternatives
8. Recording program history
9. Providing feedback to staff
10. Highlighting goals (as cited in Powell, 2006, p. 104)

Having covered the *why* of program evaluation, the *what* and *how* emerge as the obvious next step; what should evaluation consist of and how should it be undertaken? Wallace and Van Fleet (2001) add that evaluation requires careful planning, rather than haphazard successes, a strict focus on established goals including determining the quality of a product or service, and reflect a deeper understanding than simple measurement can provide. (as cited in Powell, 2006, 104) A theme that is revisited often is the emphasis on relationships between organizations, staff, clients and “operational performance.” Not only does the use of the term “relationship” denote a cause-

and-effect relationship between agents of the program, methods and end results, but also the interpersonal relationships at work within the program. (Powell, 2006, p.104)

Where Powell begins to deviate from the purpose of this study is in his breakdown of the evaluation methods. While Powell (2006) studies a more complete version of program evaluation, the purpose here is to assess the impact and outcomes in particular, as well as process evaluation. Although other aspects such as input measurement are indeed significant, no program can exist in a vacuum, these are topics to be explored elsewhere. At this point in the literature, Powell's focus on libraries intensifies and is thus problematic when applied to behavior management programs. However, he does provide a point from which to begin with both of these focus topics. Rossi, Lipsey, and Freedman's (2004) analysis indicates that outcomes are tied to the benefits of these programs, and not just reflections of whether or not they were provided. (as cited in Powell, 2006, p. 106) Presbie, Brown and National (1976) provide an extensive list of desirable outcomes that have proven to result from effective behavior modification. The list includes, among many others, improvements in reading, homework, social interactions and truancy, as well as in areas not directly related to school such as athletics and certain safety habits. (Presbie, et al., 1976, p.10)

Rather than focusing on the specific outcomes, process evaluation is intended to account for the means by which these results are obtained. One is reminded of the familiar notion that it is the journey, and not the destination, that matters, although it is important to note that the cliché's exclusion of the destination is not appropriate here. According to Patton (2002), process data are useful for analyzing the strengths and areas of improvement in the context of the entire

process, rather than simply the result (as cited in Powell, 2006, p.108). The specifics of process evaluation, in this case, are best explored through the lens of behaviorism, which can account for the particular aspects of behavior modification necessary to maximize the effectiveness of the program's implementation. However, Edmondson and Hoover (2008) provide an insight into methods of collecting data through their own work on a bullying prevention program at a school in Illinois. They advocate the use of the students' own behavioral and attitudinal self-reports, collected in part through questionnaires, as well as teacher-perception data, due to the teachers' direct involvement not only with the implementation of the program but also their daily interactions with the students that made their input invaluable to the success of a program. (Edmondson & Hoover, 2008, p.28-29).

Further support for the use of self-reporting from program participants can be found in Jim Nute's 2001 study of the Newfound program, his own pseudonym for the Island program. The three-page survey used by Nute consists of three segments: "My experience in the program," designed to yield basic demographic information; "Community Phase Survey," so that respondents could assess the program's community (off-island) phase; and a final portion intended to collect qualitative data in order to "inform the qualitative responses." (Nute, 2001, p.64) The latter portion of the survey includes four important questions relating to the importance of being visited by staff members, whether said staff members can be considered friends, whether these visits lead the participant to use lessons learned during the program's island phase, and what they might change about the community phase (Nute, 2001, p. 79).

Nute's approach differs from that of Edmondson and Hoover in that it intentionally excludes parents and teachers from the survey:

Finally, the sample frame excluded parents, referring officials and others so that this study could have a singular focus – the boys. While the community phase has an impact on and is, to varying degrees, influenced by these other populations, the majority of its programmatic resources are devoted to working directly with the boys. It then stands to reason that the assessment data should come, first and foremost, from the boys. (Nute, 2001, p. 33)

Nute goes on to qualify this statement, indicating that data from other populations is useful but outside the scope of his own project.

Powell advocates the use of benchmarking as a tool for program evaluation. He defines benchmarking as the process of evaluating a library's inputs and outputs in comparison with peers. The author explains that benchmarking is useful for establishing best practices, identifying changes to improve services, evaluating opinions and needs of users, identifying trends, using new ideas as a starting point for collaboration, and training staff. (Powell, 2006, p. 109)

Cohen, Kincaid and Childs (2007) examine benchmarks used to evaluate school-wide positive behavior support (SWPBS) programs. These interventions, according to Lewis and Sugai (1999), are designed to improve the school environment with system-wide positive behavioral interventions, including a positively stated purpose, clearly and positively defined rules and expectations, and procedures for ensuring compliance with the expectations (as cited in

Cohen, Kincaid and Childs, 2007, p. 203). The schoolwide Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) used for this study is a 53-item rating scale that measures how closely a school is implementing SWPBS with respect to the guidelines. (Cohen, Kincaid & Childs, 2007, p.204) Being focused mainly on the *process* of the program's implementation, the items on the BoQ are directly derived from the program's training manual. The importance of each item was rated by trainers and experts in positive behavior support (PBS) on a scale from 1 (“minimally important”) to 3 (“critically important”), thus establishing a point value for each (Cohen, Kincaid & Childs, 2007, p.205). The study concludes that the tool is a reliable and valid means of assessing this type of program, citing the need for larger sample sizes in order to ensure a more effective assessment tool (Cohen, Kincaid and Childs, 2007, p.212).

While the above benchmarking tool addresses the need for quantitative data, a more holistic approach is appropriate for collecting qualitative information; namely, comparing the successes and failures of Island with those of other programs. Goldberg (1979) examines the Youthtown project in Israel, a program that was proposed to address problems of juvenile delinquency among marginal youth and providing resources in an informal, street-club-like setting that would improve – or at least, alter – the lives of the youths involved (Goldberg, 1979, p.22-23). The initiative encountered a number of problems during its implementation at the Greentown site. Not only did the lack of trained educators in Greentown provide an obstacle to selecting a director, but the selection of the site itself imposed considerable social and geographic distance between all significant parts of the organization. (Goldberg, 1979, p.38) The program was also afflicted by problems caused by the disconnect between themselves and the

community around them (Goldberg, 1979, p.40) and as a result of these distancing factors, suffered from communication breakdowns:

Not only is the distance between Greentown and the center of the country involved, but also the fact that members of the steering committee lived in two different cities and the supervisor lived in a kibbutz about one-half hour away from Youthtown. One outcome of this situation was that the researchers found themselves filling this communication gap. They were the only ones linked to the project who felt they had to know everything that was going on-administratively, among the counselors, in the town, and so forth (Goldberg, 1979, p.39).

These factors combined caused the municipal government of Greentown to view Youthtown as either a threat or simply a “puzzling and particularly taboo anomaly” (Goldberg, 1979, p. 41). Other problems emerged as well, including ones that affected the program itself at its site. The end of 1974 saw break-ins, vandalism and theft ranging from sugar and tea to record players and other expensive items. The counselors lacked the organization to know how to effectively manage the problem, and the demoralization among participants resulted in decreased attendance (Goldberg, 1979, p.34).

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of any program that intends to manage or modify behavior, it is necessary to link concepts that inform program evaluation with the science of behaviorism. The work of B.F. Skinner is often referred to in this context, but is often misunderstood. DeBell and Harless (1992) provide a study of common myths and misperceptions surrounding Skinner's work, identifying and correcting the most common errors



in understanding. Contrary to what many students of behaviorism believe, Skinner acknowledged the role of physiology and genetics in predicting, but not controlling, behavior, a misconception that arises from his focus on controllable factors (DeBell & Harless, 1992, p.69). However, this confusion is easy to understand given some quotes from Skinner (1968) himself: “..the traditional concepts of reward and punishment are about as close to operant conditioning as traditional concepts of heat, space, or matter are to contemporary scientific treatments” (as quoted in Cautilli, Rosenwasser & Hantula, 2003, p.238). However, examining later work by Skinner (1984) reveals that his views, although somewhat deterministic, do not necessarily exclude factors other than conditioning and even lend themselves to explanations via genetics and/or biology: “The joint product of (i) contingencies of survival for natural selection and (ii) contingencies of reinforcement responsible for the repertoires of individuals, including (iii) the special contingencies maintained by an evolved social environment” (as quoted in Cautilli, Rosenwasser & Hantula, 2003, p.238).

Similarly, although Skinner might appear to support the idea that *all* behavior results from prior conditioning, he neither confirmed nor disproved nor even *negated* the idea of innate behaviors, but simply cautioned against using biology or genetics to explain behavior too quickly, for fear of discounting as-yet undiscovered psychological factors (DeBell & Harless, 1992, p.69).

Skinner is also very often falsely accused of neglecting the unique properties of individuals. To the contrary, he makes the point that a combination of genetics and personal history makes such an exclusion impossible (as cited in DeBell & Harless, 1992, p.69). This

attitude is reflected in his use of single subjects in his experimental designs, as well as his reporting of experimental reports as individual records rather than generalized information (DeBell & Harless, 1992, p.69). Furthermore, Skinner was highly critical of education for its lack of individualization, stating that it is more valuable to allow students to progress at their own pace (as cited in DeBell & Harless, 1992, p.69).

The use of punishment as a method of behavior control, though prevalent, faces increasing controversy as research continues to support other methods. Skinner's acknowledgment of the widespread use of punishment is often misconstrued as support for the same; however, this is not the case. In addition to encouraging the use of positive reinforcement, Skinner opposed the use of punishment in behavior control because not only did it not eliminate problematic behavior, but often led to behavior worsening (DeBell & Harless, 1992, p.70).

While the work of B.F. Skinner provides a sound basis for understanding the fundamental elements of behavior, the application of his theoretical elements to practice also merits some examination. Paciotti (2010) begins her study of Caring Behavior Management (CBM) with the research-based assertion that a caring and well-managed classroom is extremely important for supporting struggling students (Paciotti, 2010, p.12). She emphasizes the need for celebrating positive behaviors, rather than denouncing negative ones. Not only will this cause a ripple effect throughout the classroom that normalizes positive behavior, but it can also serve as a reminder for students to keep their own behavior in check (Paciotti, 2010, p. 13).

Paciotti also provides a framework for establishing a caring behavior program, in the form of a collection of attributes:

1. A caring, joyful spirit.
2. Students develop a vested interest in CBM.
3. Frequent and consistent reinforcement.
4. Students must believe that positive reinforcers are attainable for all, not just a few.
5. Incorporation of both individual and group reinforcers.
6. Visual reminders of progress. (Paciotti, 2010, p.13-15)

Paciotti stresses the benefits of creating an environment in this way:

Not only does CBM contribute to better behavior in the classroom, it is a visible way of demonstrating care for students. This is especially important for students who are not used to being the "cared-for" (Noddings, 2003, p. 60) because those students "will at least receive attention and, perhaps, learn to respond to and encourage those who genuinely address them" (p. 61). In fact, Noddings (2003) observes that unless students themselves perceive that teachers care about them, caring does not really exist (Paciotti, 2010, p.17).

#### Statistical Information

Finn (1993) conducted two studies of engagement and achievement using a sample of eighth-graders from the U.S. Department of Education's NELS:88 survey. One study explored the relationship between participation in school and classroom activities with academic performance, while the other examined the behaviors separating at-risk students with higher

levels of academic success from lower-performing at-risk students. Finn concludes that attendance and classroom participation decisively affect a student's likelihood of failing or dropping out of school, and depend on positive feedback from school staff, friends and parents.

### Chapter 3 Method

The objectives of behavior management, though easy to name, are difficult to express in numbers. For this reason, the statistical information available on this topic takes a backseat to the more holistic approach: interviews. Due to geographical restrictions, the interviews were sent via email to two of the Island Program's more prominent staff members. The questions were designed to elicit responses about the theory and philosophy of the Island Program, as well as address some of the program's problematic aspects.

#### Interview with an Expert

My interview with Ted and Jackson, pseudonyms, veteran staff members of the Island program, illuminated much of the program's approach to the boys that they serve. Above all, they highlighted the program's emphasis on positivity in all aspects of its operations. In addition to providing a place for the boys to feel a sense of belonging, the program strives to teach the boys to be in control of their behavior for its own sake, rather than out of fear of punishment. Jackson contrasts this approach to the program's early days, from which emerge stories of yelling and intimidation, as well as indications of a more “boot-camp-like” tendency. He describes three broad indicators of “success” for this program. On the most basic level, some success has been achieved if a boy thinks of his Island experience as being positive. Outside of that, he hopes to see that graduates of the program develop self-control and respect for others, and finally use the experience to help them lead happy and productive lives.

However, he cites the “ethereal and philosophical” nature of these goals impedes quantifying and collecting data on their success or failure, not to mention the inconsistent participation of the boys and their families with surveys. Ted's take on this question, on the other hand, is divided into short term objectives – the boys recognizing negative and positive behaviors – intermediate term objectives – increasing the number of positive decisions and behaviors – and long term objectives – forming the boys into responsible, respectful men who are active in their communities and able to challenge themselves.

#### Sample and Site

Information for this project was derived from an interview questionnaire sent to two high-ranking members of the Island staff. “Ted” and “Jackson” live in New Hampshire, and work at Island year-round as the Executive Director and Program Director, respectively.

#### Ethical Standards

The study followed the ethical guidelines in using human subjects in research as articulated by the American Psychological Association (2010). Additionally, this proposal was reviewed by the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, approved and assigned #8289.

#### Access and Permissions

The two participants were selected based on my prior experience as an employee of the Island program. Both participants were my supervisors during my time with the program, and I have maintained contact with them since the end of this experience. Questionnaires and consent

forms were sent to the two participants electronically and returned via email and U.S. Postal Service mail.

#### Data Gathering Strategies

##### Interview approach

Participants received a questionnaire containing the following questions:

1. In your own words, how would you characterize the Island Program?
2. Based on this characterization, what is the advantage of this kind of program?
3. How has the program changed over time? Think in terms of its approach to the boys, discipline, and/or general philosophy.

In a past survey of active and nonactive Island boys, one stated that, if he could change anything about the staff visits, it would be “how they restrain the boys their [sic]. I think it doesn't help any. It will just make them get into more trouble.”

4. What is your reaction to this claim?
5. What approach do Island staff members take to restraints, and what is the rationale for doing so?
6. How has the program changed since you've been here?
7. What is the rationale for Island's boys-only approach?
8. Explain the rationale for not informing the counselors about the boys' personal details prior to their arrival.

9. Assuming that budget and resources were not an issue, what aspect(s) of the Island program would you most want to change?

10. In your opinion, what constitutes “success” in a program like this? In other words, what specific criteria would you look for?

11. What obstacles do you face collecting data on the program's participants?

12. What role does staff morale play in the success of the program?

13. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the program's effectiveness, methods or philosophy?

#### Data Analysis Approach

Upon receiving the completed questionnaires from participants, they were examined closely and separately. Key points from each were selected and compared. Special attention was paid to commentary related to behavior management theory, particularly where it relates to Island's philosophy, policies and practices. The final analysis is a synthesis of the two interviews, both in terms of comparison and contrast.



## Chapter 4 Findings

### Overall Findings, Themes

After reading and reflecting on the interview responses, several key points emerged. They are discussed in this section.

Jackson described the transition made by Island in the early days of the program's existence in 1969 to the present day. The militaristic approach taken by counselors through the 1970s and 80s, the use of intimidation and yelling – as well as public humiliation, according to Ted – as a means of behavior management, and the punitive approach to discipline were abandoned in favor of a more compassionate approach that favored the use of positive reinforcement, as well as an emphasis on the boys' internalizing the locus of control. Although some situations do necessitate the use of physical restraints (requiring special CPI training), the overwhelming majority of discipline at Island is completely hands-off. Ted adds that the boys are informed extensively about the challenging nature of the program, and their participation is completely voluntary.

According to Jackson, the boys begin their on-island experience with a clean slate. The staff members know little about the boys, save for their names – a policy that is meant to allow the boys to create their own identity in the program, and to prevent the counselors from developing any preconceptions about them. Ted notes that there was a time that this information was provided, and in addition to clashing with the “clean slate” approach it was deemed to be ineffective.

The Island Program is defined in no small part by its emphasis on community. The choices that the boys make while involved with the program are repeatedly linked to their participation in community events. While Jackson identifies this as a major strength of the program, he also acknowledges room for improvement. Given unlimited resources, Jackson would extend the scope of the year-round outreach program by hiring more outreach staff and making it possible for the boys to continue with the program for eight years or more, as opposed to the current maximum of six years.

## Chapter 5 Discussion /Analysis

### Summary of Major Findings

Ted and Jackson's appraisals of the Island Program's community-oriented, positive discipline-based approach demonstrate a strong connection between the policies and methods of the program and the theoretical literature. By emphasizing the role of the boys' capacity to make choices for themselves, and encouraging the boys to make positive decisions for themselves rather than coercing, the Island Program allows the boys to internalize the locus of control so that the positive habits that they begin to develop during their time with the program are sustainable in the years that follow. In other words, the boys can make positive choices for the sake of making positive choices, rather than doing so to avoid punishment. However, the idea of “leveling the playing field” by withholding personal details about the boys from the counselors remains problematic. This policy, in its attempt at allowing the boys to enter the program with a clean slate, also hides the presence of special needs among the boys that cannot be served in this environment. This is not meant to criticize the idea of allowing boys to form their own identities within the program without the burden of counselors' preconceived notions, but rather to emphasize the need for the policies of the program to accommodate boys with different needs than their peers.

### Comparison of Findings to Previous Research

Island can be compared to the Youthtown project in Israel in that both programs attempted to serve similar populations of boys by providing a safe place in which participants could be made to feel as though they belonged. However, the community approach in Youthtown faced many obstacles of its own making, including the distance between the program and its directors that undermined the program's link with the community around it, as well as creating (or at least, failing to prevent) discord within the program. Comparing that to Paciotti's conclusions from her work on Caring Behavior Management, the link is clear: the lack of direct involvement carried with it a lack of perceived care on the part of the program's directors. Comparing that to the direct involvement of Island's entire staff in the day-to-day operations of the program, and the one-on-one approach of outreach staff members during the school year, one can see the role of “caring” in distinguishing these programs from one another.

### Limitations/Gaps in the Study

The main difficulty in this study, meant to be a means of evaluating behavior management programs, is in the necessity of relying on data that are incomplete and/or qualitative. If the goal is to determine whether behavior has improved, it would not only be necessary to define “good behavior,” but also to closely monitor individuals to ascertain whether this unified standard of “good behavior” was being adhered to, and to what extent. Further complicating matters would be the role of “quantum behavior”- that is, the idea that subjects might alter their behavior if they know they are being observed. Finally, the study leaves out the role of regional cultural norms in the development of so-called “positive behaviors,” a consideration that can affect how we define

behavior as either “positive” or “negative” as well as determining the effectiveness of certain methods in certain settings. The omission of this consideration in practice could lead to an unwelcome imposition of values on these populations, skewing the outcomes by way of resentment and/or resistance.

#### Implications for Future Research

Continuing this line of inquiry would necessitate more in-depth research into individual populations, monitoring individuals' behavior before, during and after participation in programs like Island. Researchers would need to monitor statistical information such as changes in grades or incidences of disciplinary problems in order to track what quantifiable progress there might be. However, due to the fluid and undefinable nature of “positive” behavior, the role of narrative testimonials from the subjects themselves, their families, their teachers, their friends, and other significant members of their communities cannot be discounted. Rather, the statistical and ethnographic approaches must be combined in order to develop a clearer picture of the program's outcomes.

#### Overall Significance of the Study

This study highlights the need for synthesizing the vast amount of research that has been done since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century on behaviorism into an effective working model of effective practices. That is, while academia has accumulated numerous theories for understanding and modifying behavior, this information is scattered and impractically difficult to put into use. By gathering and arraying this information into a series of practices that can be applied universally, researchers can provide a resource that is valuable not only for evaluating and transforming

existing programs but also as a framework for proliferating effective behavior management practices in new contexts.

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